



**PORT <sup>DE</sup><sub>OF</sub> QUÉBEC**

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## Press release

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*Notice to news media*

*For immediate release*

### **Port of Québec breaks all records for international cruise ships**

***Québec City, November 6, 2008 – The Québec Port Authority (QPA) reports very positive results from international cruise ship operations, with more than 112,000 passengers and crew members visiting Québec City, a 20% increase over 2007.***

More than 81,000 passengers and 31,400 crew members visited the Québec City region this season. This substantial rise in passenger levels is due to an increase in the number of ship visits—84 compared to 74 last year—as well as a greater number of large cruise liners. "We are delighted to see our efforts pay off after working hard over the years to attract the world's leading cruise lines. Now we need to continue our efforts, maintain our growth, and seize new business opportunities," declared Mr. Ross Gaudreault, President & CEO of the Port of Québec.

The 2008 cruise ship season was marked by several major events, including first-time visits to Québec City by *Vistamar* and *Explorer of the Seas*, as well as by the latest addition to the Holland America Line fleet, *Eurodam*, which went into service on July 1, 2008. As for the *Explorer of the Seas*, the Port of Québec was the only St. Lawrence River port capable of accommodating the Royal Caribbean International liner. Weighing 137,308 tons, and with more than 3,000 passengers aboard, the ship was the biggest liner to dock in the port this season. Due to a request of the cruise line itself, the Port of Québec berthed the *Explorer of the Seas* in the Anse au Foulon sector for special logistics reasons.

September 23 saw another memorable event when the magnificent *Queen Elizabeth II* made its final visit to the city. The Cunard liner has sailed the

oceans since 1969 and has already carried more than 2.5 million passengers. On November 27, it is due to arrive in Dubai, where it will be converted into a floating hotel. Although the cruise season began in May, traffic was heaviest in September and October, as is customary.

Among the 84 ships visits this season, four embarkation/debarkation operations on *Sea Princess* and *Eurodam* were successfully conducted involving a total of 16,900 passengers. Indeed, *Eurodam*, the biggest Holland America Line ship to undertake this type of operation on its very first visits to Québec City, has confirmed its embarkation/debarkation operations in the Port of Québec in 2009 and 2010. Holland America Line is the Port of Québec's biggest client, with more than 28,000 passengers in 2008.

Forecasts call for 2009 to be just as successful as 2008. But the Port of Québec will remain cautious in its estimates and will not make them public until March 2009. "We still don't know what the impact of the global economic slowdown will be, even though the international cruise industry has always been relatively untouched by this kind of fluctuations. Until next spring, the port visits scheduled for 2009 are subject to change," explained the President & CEO. "But I can already tell you that there will be a significant increase in the number of cruise passengers boarding and debarking in the Port of Québec," added Mr. Gaudreault. In addition, there will be more than a dozen visits to the Port of Québec by ships too large to sail to Montréal. Boarding/debarking operations are a major contributor to Québec City's tourism industry, with substantial direct economic spinoffs for the hotel and restaurant sectors. Direct spending by passengers and crew members in Québec City has been estimated at over \$12 million for 2008.

The cruise industry brings over \$100 million to Québec annually, with an average per-passenger expenditure of \$118 per debarkation. Québec City is a port of call for all cruise ships sailing the St. Lawrence River route, in addition to serving as home harbour to a number of luxury liners.

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